

**March 26, 2026 Board of Trustees, Public Hearing for Garbage Fees
on Tax Bill and Water/Sewer Rates Change
5:00 PM Community House**

Present: Mayor Dawn White, Trustees Steven Elwood, Missy Baker, Brenda Phillips, Thomas Steele, Village Clerk Marissa Nellis, Deputy Clerk Cheri VanBrocklin, Treasurer Joanne Young, Fire Chief Chris Weaver

Public: Janice Zoller, Nino Polidori, Patsy Schoff, Larry Schoff, Dan Uber, Francel Hulbert-Shaut, Bob Dennis, Peggie Hilles, Margaret DiGiacomo, Carol Pedro, Barbara Stagliano, Elenor Weaver, Janice MacLauchlin, Dawn Kane, Clark MacLauchlin, Kassidy Cabanas, John Lull, Jim Castrucci, Thomas Ellwood, Nelson Darrach III, John Lewandowski, Leanne Brisben, Peter Hosel, Patrick Rapkiewicz, Francine Wright, Jim Castrucci

Meeting was called to order at 5:00 PM by Mayor White, the pledge was said.

Mayor White welcomed new Board members Brenda Phillips and Thomas Steele.

Mayor White commented on turning the subject of the garbage rates over to the Treasurer and reminded citizens there is no public comment until after the Treasurer and Board have had a discussion.

Treasurer Joanne Young introduced herself. She explained that currently the Village is paying approximately \$209,000.00/year for garbage pick-up with a contract in place until 2028. The price has gone up about \$5,000.00 a month with the last contract increase. With the Village budget, we are looking going forward for ways to bring in additional revenue so that our Budget deals with covering our operating costs of the Village so that towards end of each Fiscal Year we don't get in a "panic mode" of trying to make sure there is enough money for the Village to operate. She expressed that many (citizens) know that last year we had to take out a Bond in order to cover our operating expenses at the end of the year which were \$230,000.00. We (the Village) needs to be paying that back this year, with paying it back in the same Fiscal Year we will be in the same situation for the last 2 months of the Fiscal Year where we are having to be very careful so we are able to meet payroll, meet costs, repairs in the Village. With the Budgets that have been created in the past, we really don't have an operating budget that allows us for the things that the Village needs, for example things at the Marina that need to be updated. Currently we only have approximately \$4000.00 left in the Marina budget (this year) to spend to get the Marina open. The Treasurer expressed the need to look ahead to project out our budget and our costs not just for this year's budget but for years to come. Because we have been operating in the red, we need to look at a budget going forward and revenues coming in to pay off debt that we have but also allow us to operate and look forward to try and build reserves as we have no reserves at this time. If there were any extensive repairs needed in the Village for anything ie: WWTP, there aren't the funds to do that right now. At some point there will be a WWTP project which we will have to borrow money for and eventually pay that money back. We need to look ahead at how we are going to fund repayment. It's not just current operating costs, but we do need to look ahead to the future of our expenses. This budget year is going to be difficult. Costs are going up everywhere. Water and sewer rates haven't been raised as they should have been all along. Raising rates for example with water and sewer isn't so we are flush with money. We are in a deficit with some of those funds and we have to pay that back and we have to pay that back in the future. The idea with the garbage because we are incurring this cost in the Village and we don't want to look at property tax increases because we are already at our constitutional tax limit. It has been proposed to look at flat fees based on the type of residence ie: 1 family home, a set fee, 2 family a set fee, and

so on. We would look at what rates would be needed for commercial properties and an apartment complex based on the number of apartments. Currently Weaver has a number of 675 they pick up for garbage, that is what they have based their price on. If we are looking at just recouping the cost of what the Village is paying for garbage pick-up, this is what the fee would cover. The fee would be put on the property tax bill so it would be paid at the time of the property taxes. It would be a flat fee, whatever the board decides, a fee based on the type of residence that is based on the assessed designation of what the house/property is by the county. The Treasurer advised she sent figures to the Board based on what her recommendations are, a fee schedule, but those numbers are up for discussion. Based on getting us (the Village) to \$209,000.00 rates could be: 1 family \$350.00 (apx. 470 parcels), 2 family \$500.00 (apx. 72 parcels), 3+ family or apartments/complexes would be \$650.00, or if the Board wants to look at it by apartment that they should designate an apartment price. Commercial also \$650.00 (apx. 26), and then for the housing developments we would possibly look at a separate rate depending on the number of apartments in that residence. If there are properties that don't receive residential pick-up, they would be excluded from having to pay. Some places may have their dumpster and would be looked at on a case by case basis.

Questions were taken from the board and answered by the Treasurer. Joanne asked if the Board wanted to discuss any of the fees, those were numbers she came up with based on 1 family, 2 family. She was asked if there any flexibility in the numbers, the Treasurer responded. She explained the Town of St Johnsville has added the fees to their tax bills, they have been doing it approximately 2 years.

Trustee Elwood discussed the number of bags agreed upon with Weaver per property. **Mayor White** asked Trustees if they wanted to set fees tonight, **Trustee Elwood** reminded that this evening was just for discussion. He feels the rates are fair. Per the Treasurer, if it is decided to not place the fees on the tax bill then the Village will need to come up with an additional \$209,000.00 in revenue or cut \$209,000.00 additional from the budget. **Trustee Thomas** asked the taxes already funding for the trash to be paid for. The Treasurer explained that it is, but there are so many other costs the Village has to incur. It's about what other services people want the Village to provide, if want to be able to provide those services how will it be done without being able to balance the budget. **Trustee Phillips** asked if we are already paying on our taxes for garbage, are we going to reduce what I'm already paying on my taxes to cover this new rate for garbage, if it's already covered and already paying it out of my taxes, now it will be collected again, are my taxes going to go down? The Treasurer responded no, based on the budget that we are putting forward. **Trustee Phillips** asked if it was a double charge (for garbage), on taxes then. **Treasurer Young** advised you aren't being charged anything right now, you are paying for police department, fire department on property taxes. **Trustee Thomas** asked for further explanation on the taxes because it is on our tax bill right now, asked about the allocation. **Treasurer Young** responded as of now it's being reallocated in other areas, that will be looked at further when we look at the budget. **Trustee Thomas** asked why this is being discussed before we have a budget in place and ready to submit. **Mayor White** advised that we don't want to have to look at raising property taxes this year. **Trustee Phillips** asked if we are adding it to our taxes, that's not considered raising taxes? **Trustee Thomas** responded yes, that it would be two items on the same bill. **Trustee Phillips** commented that the tax bill will not be lowered by the amount that has been incurred previously so now paying what we were paying and now adding garbage on top of it. **Trustee Thomas** responded yes, that money we were paying for the garbage before is being taken and pushed somewhere else. A **member from the audience** spoke up with an explanation the Village is in the "red", is proposing is to make us for our garbage separate which has already been included in our taxes, is how we (the Village) is going to get in the green and out of the hole that has been dug, she stated, where did the funds go and why did we (the Village) go into the red, that's what needs to be explained first. Where is all the money going? She referred to last year not being able to make payroll and funds were taken from different places and we were supposed to get a grant funded back, did that not come through? **Mayor White** responded the grant came through, we have the money to pay back the Band, all of those grants came through, we had many repairs at the WWTP, repairs at the water shed, costs for everything needing to be purchased was more that was expected to be purchased, we don't want to be

ending the year with a “penny” (so to speak), we want money in the general fund and need contingencies, reserve funds for when things happen. It’s going to take time for the WWTP to be finished. We don’t have to start paying back that \$5,000,000.00, 30 year loan until the work is finished but the Village needs to start budgeting for that. We haven’t looked ahead in the budgets that have been prepared in the last few years and that is essentially part of the problem. The same member from the audience commented in response that basically this is the only way for the Village to incur costs like this to get out of the red. **Mayor White** responded as “yes, unless taxes were to be raised 15-20%”. **Trustee Elwood** gave a couple examples of costs that went up, for example health insurance. **Treasurer Young** said the budgets in the past have not allowed us to incur the costs we needed, she explained that the Village hasn’t been able to properly function with the budgets they’ve been dealing with.

Public comments were interjected regarding trash and recycling items, even in other municipalities, Treasurer Young responded that we are in a contract with Weaver until 2028, renegotiations can be done then.

Public comments were interjected regarding water and sewer monies, budget questions, grant money questions, and the garbage fees on the tax bill and constitutional tax. **Treasurer Young** responded that it is not subject to the constitutional tax limit because it’s on a separate line item, it’s not tied to assessed value, it’s a flat fee based on the assessed value of a house.

Mayor White reviewed and shared the current contract with Weaver Sanitation.

A lot of public comment ensued with speaking over one another about various topics.

Mayor White moved on to the subject of water and sewer rates, again giving the floor to Treasurer Young.

Treasurer Young explained the rates that have been set, have not been set to actually cover the costs of operation. Water and sewer has typically run in a deficit for many years. Water and sewer were combined in to one account according to the Comptroller they are supposed to be separated into 2 accounts. Water and sewer have been funding each other instead of funding their own account. The Treasurer reviewed past rates, current and going forward.

Much public discussion went on, many speaking over each other.

Mayor White attempted to end the topic of water and sewer, unable to, public discussion continued.

John Lull gave some information regarding when he worked on the annual report, water, sewer rates as well as asking some questions.

Trustee Steele commented he understands that water rates haven’t been raised in 10 years and rates need to go up, talk is about water, sewer rates, previous garbage rates, we are talking about making up deficits, what considerations have been made about cutting anything (in the budget)? **Mayor White** responded that we haven’t started the budget yet, we are starting tonight. **Trustee Steele** responded why are we discussing any rates before we have a rough draft of the budget? **Mayor White** responded that water and sewer rates need to be changed before the next bills go out.

Patrick Rapkiewicz , citizen, spoke regarding his water/sewer, his rates, usage compared to another city/town. He asked some questions of the Treasurer as well which she answered.

Public Comment (that signed up for it) Frances Hulbert-Shaut comments regarding the marina, water and sewer usage.

Motion to adjourn the Public Hearing was made at 6:43pm by Trustee Elwood seconded by Mayor White, there were three nays, motion not passed.

Trustee Steele stated he had another question for the Treasurer. He expressed “everything we have talked about funds of water and sewer “co-mingled” with water and sewer that should not have been and other funds we don’t know what happened to them, we are doing all of this raising of rates to make up for that, we weren’t in this condition four years ago, what “safelocks” are we putting in place to make sure this doesn’t happen again”? he stated “he has been a Board member for 1 hour, 43 minutes and it sounds like we are jumping right to raising the rates to make up for money that was lost for mismanagement of this Administration, so what safelocks do we have in place so this isn’t done again, either by incumbents who stay in or people who come in in the future who abuse apparently mismanaged books?” **Mayor White** responded that “we have a trained treasurer now where we did not have a trained treasurer previously, the Comptrollers office is here and setting up guidelines and financial policies so that this doesn’t happen again.” **Treasurer Young** explained it has always been the Governing Board, the Village Board, who has fiscal control of the Village, whoever has been in here and may not have conveyed information to the Board in order for them to make the correct decisions. “We cannot look back what we are doing is looking forward. We are doing what the Comptroller says, we are using actual Government software that doesn’t allow co-mingling of funds, it doesn’t allow without an audit trail to transfer money from one fund to another, and someone being documented of who is making the transfer. Changes are being made going forward. We will have budgets and documents the Board will be able to see, line items, what has been spent to date, what has been collected for revenue, this is what we expect to collect for the rest of the year.”

Trustee Steele made a public apology to Treasurer Young that his public comment was not meant to accuse her of anything, but meant to accuse previous board members. **Treasurer Young** responded she thinks there should be discussion of the Board of what they want their policies to be going forward and the information should be available to whoever asks and all you have to do is come to the office. You don’t need to FOIL things, you can just come to the office and ask the question, send an email, any documentation is available.

Organizational meeting will be on Thursday, April 9, 2026 at 5:00pm at the Community House with a special meeting immediately following to discuss Resolution #3 of 2026.

Motion to adjourn the Public Hearing at 6:55pm made by Trustee Elwood seconded by Trustee Baker, all in favor, motion passed.

Minutes prepared by Deputy Clerk